



POCKET PC Expert

A Pocket PC is much more than just a digital filofax, so why is it so woefully underused? Here Steve Clack explains how to get more from this versatile device, and how a wealth of add-ons are well within your grasp



PALM TREO: NOW WITH WINDOWS MOBILE

After months of speculation, details of the Microsoft-powered version of the popular Palm Treo smartphone device have finally been confirmed. Due for release in early 2006, the Treo 700w (also dubbed the Treo 670) will run Windows Mobile 5.0 in place of the Palm Operating System used by all Treo models to date. Confirmed specifications include 64MB of internal memory, Bluetooth, an SDIO expansion slot and a 1-megapixel camera. Screen resolution is yet to be confirmed, but is expected to be 240x240 or 320x320 pixels.

Details of UK availability have not yet been announced. Visit www.microsoft.com/windowsmobile for more information.

■ WINDOWS MOBILE 5.0 UPDATES – FOR SOME

Devices running the new Windows Mobile 5.0 Operating System are starting to appear. However, Microsoft has made it clear that many existing Pocket PC models would not be upgradable to the new OS.

According to Microsoft's Mike Calligaro, because only a small percentage of Pocket PC owners have taken advantage of OS upgrades in the past, it's often financially impractical for hardware manufacturers to offer such upgrades. Calligaro said the Windows Mobile team was investigating ways to make the upgrade process simpler and cheaper in future. Meanwhile Pocket PC users should be aware that Windows Mobile 5.0 upgrades for their current hardware may not be forthcoming.

■ ACTIVESYNC 4.0 ARRIVES

The long-awaited ActiveSync 4.0 has been released alongside Windows Mobile 5.0. But Microsoft said that users running anything other than Windows Mobile 5.0 devices should not upgrade to the new ActiveSync version. Warnings have been posted that Windows Mobile 5.0 users may experience "connection problems" with the new software. Affected users can check the troubleshooting guide at www.microsoft.com/windowsmobile.

A few years ago, handheld computers were fairly limited in their capabilities. This was mainly due to their meagre memory and storage capacity, together with their low-resolution, monochrome screens. That's all changed now, though. Modern handhelds have crisp, bright, high-resolution colour displays and gigabytes of storage via plug-in SD or CF memory cards. Yet despite these advances, many people treat their PDA as little more than an address book. This is a pity, as the modern Pocket PC is a veritable powerhouse that's capable of much, much more.

The chances are that you mastered the basic Calendar and Contacts applications soon after you bought your Pocket PC. But here we look at some of the other, less obvious tasks that your PDA is capable of performing.

NEWS AND WEATHER

Most of us like to keep up with the news and weather on a daily basis, and this is something for which your Pocket PC is perfectly suited. AvantGo is the most obvious choice when it comes to daily news, as it's capable of grabbing daily newsfeeds from many popular sources, including the BBC, ITN,

The Guardian as well as a host of US-specific information. Most Pocket PCs come with AvantGo pre-loaded, complete with the ActiveSync plug-in needed to download the latest news updates via your PC's internet connection and copy them to your handheld. If you don't know how to set it up, you'll find all the information you need at www.avantgo.com, including a walkthrough for setting up a free user account and configuring the news items you wish to enable. You can also download the latest version of the free AvantGo reader software from the site.

Getting daily weather forecasts for almost any city in the world is simplicity itself, once you have the add-on program to do it. Two good options for this are Spb Weather (\$15, around £9, from www.spbsoftwarehouse.com) and Weather Center (also \$15, from www.neohand.com). Weather Center is a standalone application that lets you select up to six cities and download detailed weather information for the coming week via your ActiveSync connection, including such details as atmospheric pressure, wind chill and dew point.

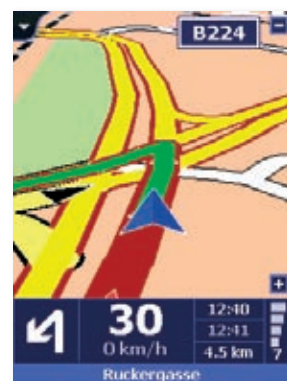
Spb Weather offers a bit less in the way of detail, but gives basic weather, humidity and wind



▲ Keep yourself up to date on all the latest news with AvantGo



▲ Slideshows and image-editing capabilities are yours with Imageeer



▲ PDA-based navigation made simple with TomTom

HINTS & TIPS PRODUCTIVITY

QUICK ADDRESS DETAILS

If some of your contacts have more than one phone number or email address, you can bring up all the alternative contact details from the Contacts list view without having to open the entry. Tap briefly on the small letter that appears to the right of the person's primary contact number to bring up a dialog containing all the details for the selected person. To set a different

one of these to appear in the main list view display, simply tap on it in the dialog. This is a handy trick that's easy to miss; anything longer than a quick tap in the letter brings up beaming and email options rather than the contact number dialog. The small letter to the right of the address corresponds to w for work phone, h for home phone, e for email address and so on.



speed details for as many cities as you like. Best of all, it shows the data on your Today screen, so there's no need to open a separate application every time you want to see the latest forecast.

As well as working via ActiveSync, these programs can update data via your handheld's own wireless connection, using WiFi or a Bluetooth phone.

FLEXIBLE MULTIMEDIA

Taking advantage of your handheld's multimedia capabilities doesn't necessarily mean trying to watch a feature-length film on its tiny screen. We looked at music playback and podcasting in *Pocket PC Expert*, *Shopper* November 2005, both of which are a great way to pass the time. You can even listen to streaming internet radio broadcasts or record them on your handheld and replay them at your leisure with Resco Pocket Radio (\$15, around £8, from www.resco.net). This can be done through a wireless connection as well as ActiveSync.

Keeping a selection of favourite photos on your Pocket PC is incredibly easy if the images were taken with a digital camera, and they look good on the small colour screen. If you have a VGA-resolution (480x640) device such as the Fujitsu Siemens Pocket Loox 720, HP iPAQ 4700 or Dell Axim X50v, you can expect stunning picture quality.

Most Pocket PCs come with a photo viewer as standard, but check out Resco Photo Viewer (\$25, around £14, from www.resco.net) or Spb Imageer (\$15, around £8, from www.spbsoftwarehouse.com) if you're looking for fancy slideshow features and simple image-editing capabilities.

com) if you're looking for fancy slideshow features and simple image-editing capabilities.

READ IT YOURSELF

Whether you're after a novel to pass the time on a long journey or an encyclopedia for reference at work, ebooks are well worth investigating. Reading a book on your PDA screen can seem a little odd at first, but the text can easily be zoomed to whatever size you find comfortable, and it's simple enough to bookmark your place and add your own notes within the text.

You can use Microsoft's own Reader program, which comes free with every Pocket PC – go to www.msit.com to browse available titles for purchase. Alternatively, you could try the excellent eReader (free from www.ereader.com; a Pro version is available for \$10, around £6) or Mobipocket Reader (free from www.mobipocket.com; £20 for the Pro version).

FINDING YOUR WAY

They're not cheap, but there's a range of in-car GPS navigation kits available for Pocket PCs. You will generally buy a package that includes the software, complete with maps of the entire country, plus a car mounting/charging kit to install the Pocket PC in your car, and a matchbox-sized GPS unit to receive the satellite signals that feed your exact position into the handheld. This will all set you back around £200, but it's a lot cheaper than

an integrated car setup or a standalone navigation system.

The latest in-car Pocket PC systems are impressively sophisticated, offering route planning with postcode precision and a scrolling 3D map, coupled with clear voice instructions. We have travelled thousands of miles with various Pocket PC-based navigation systems, and while they're certainly not infallible they're a godsend if you do a lot of driving.

TomTom Navigator 5 is perhaps the most mature PDA-based navigation product, and certainly one of the best of the current crop. See www.tomtom.com for details and current pricing. As well as hooking up the GPS receiver using a cable, you have the option of a Bluetooth version, which can be tucked unobtrusively into the corner of your windscreen without ugly trailing cables. This has to be recharged every five to six hours, but if you're happy to tackle this kind of wiring project it's possible to wire it into your car's power system and feed the cables around your dashboard. **ES**

CONTACT

POCKET PC EXPERT

If there is anything you would like to see covered in *Pocket PC Expert*, please contact us at the address below

pocketpc@computershopper.co.uk

REVIEW PASSWORD STORE

DEVELOPERONE CodeWallet Pro 2005

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$30 (around £17)

DETAILS www.developerone.com

Even if you remember to lock your Pocket PC with a password every time it's switched off, a dedicated password storage program is still a sensible idea. As well as keeping all your passwords, bank account, credit card and serial number details in one place, the best 'electronic wallet' programs lock your data after a minute or so of inactivity, making it impossible to leave your valuable information accidentally vulnerable.

CodeWallet Pro 2005 is one of the most costly programs of its type, but it's also the

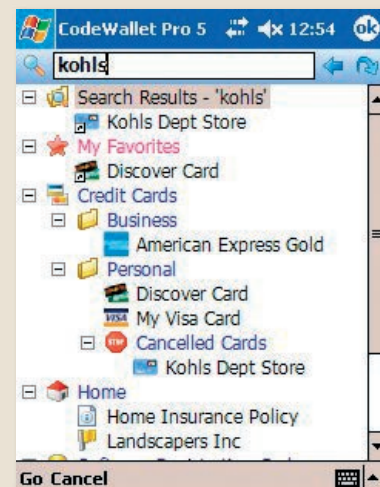
slickest, presenting all your personal information via a Windows Explorer-like screen of nested files and folders. Common data types such as credit card and web password details are easy to enter, thanks to a good array of standard templates, and these help to prompt you for all the required information, as well as speeding up the entry process.

For ultimate flexibility, you can also create your own entry types using a built-in forms designer, and even store plain text notes, all of which makes the CodeWallet a truly flexible secure data repository.

You can keep all this information synchronised with a companion Windows application. However, that costs another \$30 (around £17), making it a costly overall package.

✓ Slick, comprehensive storage solution for all your private data

✗ PC desktop companion program costs an extra \$30



▲ Keep your password, card and money details safe and secure with CodeWallet Pro 2005

REVIEW GAME

ESOFT INTERACTIVE Spot!

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$15 (around £9)

DETAILS www.esoftinteractive.com

It's hard to come up with truly original ideas for games, but Spot! is certainly



◀ Spot on: pinpoint the differences in two near-identical images in Spot!

something new for the Pocket PC. The game is based on the traditional 'spot the difference' classic. You're presented with two almost-identical images from which you must find a handful of subtle differences. It's beautifully executed, with a quick tap to locate each mismatch and a clear onscreen display of your progress.

If you tap the wrong spot you're immediately penalised, and there's also an option to work against the clock if you're feeling quick-witted.

The game has only a relatively small selection of puzzles, some more fun than others, but there's a huge number available for free download from the developer's website, which makes this a game with plenty of replay value.

Don't be misled into thinking it's purely for kids – it's just as addictive for adults, and a good way to hone your visual skills, too.

✓ Clever; original; enjoyable for users of all ages

✗ Some of the puzzles are less fun than others